

The American Catholic Historical Association

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AT Cleveland, on December 30, 1919, a group of some fifty Catholic students and writers of history met for the purpose of establishing a national organization whose object is study and research in the field of general Catholic history. The American Catholic Historical Association, which was the result of this meeting, began its life with every prospect of success. Dr. J. Franklin Jameson, Director of the Department of Historical Research of the Carnegie Institution, who was present as one of the founders of the new association, recalled the fact that thirty-five years before he had been among those who organized the American Historical Association, at Saratoga, in 1884, and that a smaller group of scholars was present that day. "The American Historical Association," he said, "founded thirty-five years ago, with a smaller number of people than are now in this parlor, is now a body of twenty-five or twenty-eight hundred members. I know no reason why in less than thirty-five years the American Catholic Historical Association might not be a body of two or three thousand members. Such membership, such prosperity, depends upon the enthusiasm with which the cause of Catholic history in America is pursued, and that in turn depends upon the consciousness with which American Catholics persevere in the great work the Church is accomplishing in this regard in our country."

In the wider field of general church history, a long list of worthy productions might be made as evidencing at all times the presence of this historical scholarship in the Church in the United States. Among the earliest of these historical studies is the "History of the Church," in five volumes, by Rev. Dr. Charles Constantine Pise, published at Annapolis, 1827-1830. This is one of the first general church histories in English and deserves to be better known to American Catholics. Dr. Pise was one of the most noted clergymen of his day, and the only

Catholic priest ever elected to the chaplaincy of the Senate. The list of American Catholic writers on church history in general contains also the names of: Rev. Dr. Parsons, whose "Studies in Church History" are still excellent treatises on the main questions in ecclesiastical history and are examples of the best scholarship of his day; Fathers Birkhauser and Guggenberger, whose Manuals of General Church History are familiar to most Catholic students; Rev. Dr. Gavan, O. S. A., whose little Manual was popular a generation ago; Rev. Dr. Pabisch, who with the present Bishop of Nashville, Dr. Byrne, translated Alzog's General Church History; and Bishop Shahan, together with the other able scholars of the Historical School at the Catholic University of America—Rev. Drs. Healy, Weber and Robinson, and their former colleague, the present Bishop of Sioux Falls, Dr. O'Gorman. Many others might be mentioned, especially Fathers Betten, S.J., and Rev. Dr. Stebbings, who have labored with success in the field of general history.

THE VALUE OF CHURCH HISTORY.

The interest shown by American Catholic historical students in this general field is, however, surpassed by their love for the history of the Church in this country, and the list of writers is naturally a much longer one. No aspect of historical study in the United States has given proof of more serious work than the study of American Catholic history during the past generation. This is a matter for sincere congratulation, for in the introduction to his "Essay on Development," Cardinal Newman deplores the neglect of ecclesiastical history which prevailed in England in his day. We know what effect the study of church history had in his conversion. It was the historical proof for the Divine character of the Church which brought his doubts to an end.

History had been to him, as to many others after him, the handmaid of religion, pointing out the sure way that leads to the Church, and ever ready to stretch forth a hand in the darkness to those still groping towards the light. Is it right that history should be of less significance and importance in the lives of those who have the happiness to be born in the true Fold—of those who stand in safety within the very light

of Christ's Church. Should it not be to them inseparably bound up with religion, and act as a safeguard and sure support of their faith?

The conversion of Bishop Kinsman has again focussed attention on the place history holds as a channel of light. His "*Salve Mater*" is a vivid portrayal of a soul's journey out of the common day of historical prejudice into the vision splendid of historical truth. Over a half-century ago, when Bishop Levi Silliman Ives published his "Trials of a Mind" as a record of the historical basis for his conversion to the Church, he added a note in his book which is particularly striking:

I have here thought it not right to omit a circumstance to which I can distinctly trace some of my earliest fears, that something might be wrong in respect to what I had received as the *facts* of Protestantism—or the real history of the Catholic Faith. Being invited by the University of North Carolina, in the year 1844, to deliver the introductory lecture before the Historical Society of the Institution recently formed, I took for my subject *the principles which must govern us in arriving at the facts of history*. This led me, by way of illustration to apply these principles to some of the commonly received theories of the English Reformation—particularly in regard to the real motive of the movement under Henry VIII, and to the real character of the events under the subsequent Catholic reign of Mary—and to my surprise I found in the course of examination, that my own views became seriously changed, especially as regarded the latter; and from the circumstances, felt bound at the time to warn my auditory against the common notion; and ever after, to guard my own mind in the study of history against over-sided party representations.

The mysterious influence of church history, as Dr. Ives called it, unsettled his calm and filled his mind with yearnings for something in religion more real than he had hitherto experienced. But it is not primarily as an *apologétique* that church history should appeal to the Catholic student. Bishop Shahan has given us in one of his most attractive pages a paragraph on the utility of church history from another standpoint:

It refines the spirit of the priest, and makes him largely tolerant and patient, by unfolding to him the incredible extent of human weakness and the mystery of God's triumph

over it; how it is eminently suggestive of plans and schemes for actual good; how it breaks the awful impact of scandal by showing that evils come through neglect of law, obedience, charity or patience; how it consoles by the examples of saints of every condition, and instructs by the writings of holy churchmen, and delights by the growth of all the arts under the influence of the Christian spirit. Its influence on the theologian is great, as a man, a Christian, a student, a priest. As a man, he learns from it that the Church he serves has ever been the friend and uplifter of humanity, and has stood as a wall of brass against oppression and injustice; that slavery and barbarism have withered before its tread, and that Caesaro-papism and blighting Islam have been warded off by it alone from our Western society. As a Christian, he learns a broader, more discriminating charity from the sight of so much human weakness, so much discrepancy between graces and deeds, office and conduct, the "fair outside and foul within." He learns the almost irresistible power of circumstances, early training, climate, topography, prejudices, inherited trend of thought and character. As a student, his judgment may be trained to a quasi-mathematical precision by acute observation, his mental vision may be so sharpened by practice as to discover shadows and outline, and motion and life in what seems deep night to ordinary men "the dark backward and abysm of time."

He may mete out with incredible nicety, the human and the accidental in ecclesiastical affairs: The malice and the intention, the ignorance, the stupidity, and the great undefinable margin of causality that no one can fairly name or describe, since its workings are hidden with God. As a priest and leader of the people, it multiplies and deepens his sympathies, brings him out of the abstract and theoretic into touch with the iron realities of life and accustoms him to see the shaping hand of God, like the weaver behind his loom, creating fairest patterns, though the ordinary looker-on observes nothing but din and disorder.

This, then, is the purpose of the American Catholic Historical Association: It sets out to incorporate under one head all those ecclesiastics and laymen who are seeking to spread among Americans of all creeds a more profound knowledge of church history and an increased spirit of veneration for the great past of our Faith.

WHY THE SOCIETY WAS FOUNDED.

The Founders of the Association may be asked whether it was necessary to create this new corporate body; whether the purpose of the Association could not have

been accomplished in some other way; and what are its relationships to existing historical organizations.

1. Before the founding of the American Catholic Historical Association, there was no historical organization in American life which satisfied the Catholic historical ideal defined by the Cleveland meeting:

(a) The chief national society, the American Historical Association, founded in 1884, welcomes Catholics into its ranks and the welcome is always a generous, wholehearted one. Catholic scholars are given liberal opportunity of participating in the annual meetings and in the discussions. But papers on distinctly Catholic subjects cannot be given a place in the Annual Reports. Since 1889, these are Government publications, and as such are limited to non-political and non-sectarian subjects. This limitation obviously has its influence on the choice of papers for the annual meetings.

(b) The American Society of Church History, founded by Philip Schaff, in 1888, met annually until 1896, when it was merged into the American Historical Association. The limitation spoken of above, soon made the merger an unacceptable one, and since 1906, the Society has met independently. The subjects which predominate in their printed papers are an indication of the viewpoint of the Society—Luther, Servatus Lupus, John Huss, Wessel Gansvoort, Zwingli, Indulgences, the Mathers, etc. The attitude of the Society has been Protestant, but the tone of most of the papers is usually irenic and not infrequently sympathetic. A few studies by Catholic scholars have been printed in the papers the past thirty odd years.

2. The definite object of the American Catholic Historical Association is to promote study and research in the field of general Catholic history. The annual meetings will be held in conjunction with those of the American Historical Association, and as far as possible in the same headquarters. These meetings are to consist of three Conferences or Sections.

(a) The Conference on Ancient Church History will bring together all those interested in Christian Antiquity. Among the leading subjects for study by this group may be cited: The spiritual conquest of the Roman Empire by Christianity; the Persecutions; the Rise of the Papal

States; the Paschal Controversy; the Heresies, particularly those which have endured down to our own day, such as Arianism and Manichaeism; the Rise of Monasticism; and the Christian influence on the social and moral life of the people. By meeting side by side with the members of the American Historical Association, Catholic scholars will be enabled to learn the point of view which prevails among those interested in ancient church history and they will undoubtedly be brought into contact with the best scholarship in America and in Europe.

(b) The Conference on Medieval Church History will continue the study down to the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Carolingian Renaissance, Scholasticism, the Church in the Norman Empire, the Guelph-Ghibelline conflict, the Rise of the Mendicant Orders, the Albigensian disorders, the Inquisition, the Architecture and Literature of the Middle Ages, the Gilds, the Avignon Popes, the Great Western Schism, the pre-Reformation heresies, the Eastern Church, and the Protestant Rebellion are among the leading topics for study. Here again, by gathering into an annual meeting the best medievalists in the Church of the United States, scholars will become cognizant of all that is being done in the foremost historical circles of America in this delightful period of Catholic life.

(c) The Modern Church History Conference will no doubt be the most popular one, owing to the widespread interest in the history of the Church in our own country. The problems to be discussed in this period from 1517 down to the present time are numberless, but chief amongst these will no doubt be the intricate and yet indispensable study of the European background to American church history.

OTHER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

No doubt, as the years go on, other Conferences will be added, such as a Conference on Catholic Bibliography, a Conference on the Housing of Ecclesiastical Archives, etc. There will also grow up Committees with even more definite aims, such as a Committee on Prize Essays, and a Committee on Scholarships to the great historical centers like Rome, Seville, Simancas, Paris and London.

3. It was quite obvious at the outset that the organization of the American Catholic Historical Association would appear to some to be unnecessary, owing to the existence of other historical groups, national in name and devoted these thirty-six years past to the progress of historical study in the United States. This delicate problem the founders of the new association met quite openly and honestly. First, with regard to the American Historical Association: It is hoped that the relations between the two societies will always be cordial, even intimate. The American Catholic Historical Association will meet each year in the same city and in the same headquarters with the American Historical Association. This will have a mutual effect; one may be pardoned in believing that it will have a mutual benefit. An experience of six years with these meetings has proven quite conclusively that the non-Catholics who come to these annual gatherings are in the fullest sympathy with Catholic historical scholarship and are anxious to avoid all historical bias. It has happened more than once that out of a group of five or six hundred persons the writer has been the only Catholic present; and if one can judge the spirit of the members of the American Historical Association by the constant inquiries and requests for guidance in subjects touching the Church, it can be stated in all fairness that no learned group in the United States will welcome more eagerly Catholic students and teachers of history. This is especially true of those interested in medieval history; for all realize, as Dr. Jameson has said, that medieval history with the Catholic Church omitted would be almost "Hamlet" with Hamlet left out. The non-existence of such a national body as the American Catholic Historical Association has left non-Catholic scholars without an authoritative guide in this field. In the synchronous meetings of the two Associations. Catholics and non-Catholics will meet on a ground familiar to both, and both will gain accordingly. There will be no duplication of effort, but mutual assistance, mutual encouragement, a healthier scholarship on both sides, and a more careful appraisal of the past. Secondly: When the American Historical Association was formed in 1884, there were societies in existence which saw a possi-

ble rivalry with the new Association. Justin Winsor, who presided over the meeting, made it quite clear that the proposed name of the new organization, though American by title was not intended to confine observation to this continent. "We are to be simply American students devoting ourselves to historical subjects without limitation of time or place. So no one can regard us as a rival of any other historical association in this country."

The American Catholic Historical Association made these words its own at the inaugural session in Cleveland. There need be no duplication of effort between the American Catholic Historical Association and the six Catholic historical societies in the United States, namely, those at Philadelphia (1884), New York (1884), St. Paul (1905), Portland, Me., (1913), St. Louis (1917), and Chicago (1918). The American Catholic Historical Association needs the good-will and the cordial assistance of these six Societies, and in particular the guidance of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia and of the United States Catholic Historical Society of New York, for the new Association is setting out on a scientific quest in which these two organizations have had over thirty-five years of experience. Lest there should be any misgivings on the question of the field the new Association is entering, the Executive Council, at its meeting in New York on February 28, 1920, voted to eliminate a fourth Conference, which had been proposed, namely, the Conference on American Church History. The American Catholic Historical Association is not, therefore, in any way connected with these six Catholic Historical Societies, but it looks to the members of these important historical groups for cordial cooperation and encouragement.

OFFICERS AND CONSTITUTION.

At the Cleveland meeting the following officers were elected: President, Lawrence F. Flick, M.D., LL.D.; Vice-Presidents, Rev. Richard H. Tierney, S.J., and Rev. Victor O'Daniel, O.P., S.T.M.; Secretary, Carlton J. H. Hayes, Ph.D.; Treasurer, Rt. Rev. Monsignor T. C. O'Reilly, D.D. V.G.; Archivist, Rev. Peter Guilday, Ph.D. The Executive Council includes, with the above named officers, Rev. Gilbert P. Jennings, LL.D. (Cleveland),

Rt. Rev. Monsignor Joseph F. Mooney, D.D., V.G., (New York), Rev. Dr. Souvay, C.M. (St. Louis), Rev. William Busch, S.T.L. (St. Paul), and Rev. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M. (Santa Barbara, Calif.).

The Constitution adopted at the Cleveland Meeting is as follows:

1. The name of this organization shall be The American Catholic Historical Association.

2. The object of this Association shall be to promote study and research in the field of Catholic history.

3. Any person approved by the Executive Council may become a member of this Association. The annual membership fee shall be three dollars. On payment of fifty dollars, any person, with the approval of the Executive Council, may become a life member.

4. The officers of this Association shall be: A President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer and an Archivist. These officers shall be selected by ballot at the regular annual meeting of the Association.

5. There shall be constituted an Executive Council of eleven members, namely, the six officers mentioned in Section 4 and five other members to be elected at the annual meeting.

6. The Executive Council shall have supreme management of all affairs and interests of the Association. It shall make arrangements for the annual meetings, and shall have power to regulate the publications of the Association. Five members of the Executive Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

7. The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds' vote at any regular meeting, provided that the proposed amendment either has been introduced at a previous meeting, or has received approval of the Executive Council.

The headquarters of the Association have been fixed permanently at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.

At the meeting of the Executive Council, New York City, February 28, 1920, it was decided to hold the first annual meeting of the Association at Washington, D. C., on December 27-30, 1920. Plans are now being completed for this meeting. Six, or at most nine, papers will be read by leading Catholic scholars, and discussion will be

permitted to all present. Breakfast sessions of the different Committees; luncheon sessions, either separately or jointly with other historical groups which meet at the same time; the subscription dinner of December 29, when Ambassador Jusserand, Cardinal Gibbons and others will speak; and a smoker at the Cosmos Club will also be held. Fortunately for this first meeting, the Chairman of the Committee on Program for the American Historical Association is at the same time Secretary of the American Catholic Historical Association—Dr. Carlton J. H. Hayes, of Columbia University, who has been a convert to the Church the past ten years. Monsignor Thomas, Pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Washington, will head the Committee on Local Arrangements, and will act as host to the members of the new Association.

To make the Church known is to make the Church loved. Charles Stanton Devas has told us in his virile English that the master-key to open a hundred closed doors is the history of the Christian Church and her life through nineteen centuries. *Kirchengeschichte als Weltgeschichte*—the world record made intelligible by the church record; it is only in understanding church history that we reach the heart of universal history, for "without it we are compelled on matters the gravest, on a field the widest, on subjects of the most fascinating interest, on issues incomparable—to remain in irremediable darkness." The spirit of the American Catholic Historical Association will ever be the spirit of love and veneration for the church history of the past. Under its influence and by its direction, ecclesiastical history will cease to be a mere chronicle of past events and will become a living, palpitating reality. Every aspect of the educational life of the nation will be all the richer for the width of outlook and of sympathy such a movement must inevitably produce; and the Mystic Bride of Christ, the Mother of the Nations, the militant leader of the world, will share with those, whose heavenly insight enables them to discern her supernatural place in the world's sanctification, the vision she already possesses of the triumph awaiting her on the Great Last Day—the milk-white hind oft doomed to death, though fated not to die.

"Freedom of Thought"

J. WILFRID PARSONS, S.J.

TOWARDS the end of the second century the Catholics of the Latin-speaking colony in Northern Africa were deeply troubled by the presence in its midst of certain men who gave themselves the name of "heretics," for, said they, they were men who chose their own doctrines (that is the Greek derivation of the word). They denied certain doctrines of the Catholic Church. When that happened, a brilliant Catholic lawyer of Carthage, named Tertullian, polished and sharpened his Latin, little used to that employment before, and wielded it to advantage. His point was that truth, being first on the field, held it by right of prescription; "heretics" were intruders. His treatise has in it many matters of interest. Among other things, he says the "heretics" were more bent on perverting good Christians than on converting the heathen, and that they made much of apostate priests, "drawing them more by promise of honors, since they could not by truth," and that they all ended by becoming devotees of Spiritism!

He has an especially interesting line of argument anent the words the heretics constantly quoted: "Seek, seek and you shall find." Seek, he asks, seek what? The truth, of course; and if you seek, you shall find it. When Christ spoke those words, he says, he had in mind a certain very definite body of doctrine. Now suppose that doctrine was already in the world? Suppose the truth exists somewhere. Such a doctrine is not the object of an indefinite search. "Seek till it is found, but when found, believe it." Why keep on seeking after you have found it? Now we claim to have found. Why should we keep on looking for it? Christ says, "Seek as long as you have not found." Is it rational to keep on looking, when the lost coin is safely in your pocket-book? The very fact of your seeking established that as the end of your seeking. "Must we re-examine all new doctrines?" he asks. "Where shall we end? With Marcion? But here Valentine says: 'Seek, and you shall find!' Where? With Valentine? But look, Apelles pursues me with the same

cry, and Ebion and Simon, and the rest of them, all in a row. That way, I'll get nowhere." Prophetic words!

Who are the people that tell the Catholic Church she must keep on seeking, that she must permit all her sons the fullest freedom to doubt their own religion? The very men who today are holding what we are perfectly sure will be discredited tomorrow, and who held yesterday what today the world is laughing at. Einstein will have his Einstein, "and so *ad infinitum*!"

Tertullian has the answer. "From my point of view," he says, "if I've found and hold what I ought to believe, and then after that, imagine I ought to keep on looking, the only reason would be that I still hope to find something, would it not? I could have such a hope, only if I had never believed or had ceased to believe."

"So you believers stop thinking altogether, then?" We stop guessing, yes. But you will find that your mind will be tolerably well occupied all the rest of your life, if you start right now to exercise it on the doctrines of the Church. Your mistake is you suppose that "thinking" consists in finding something new, not caring much if it be true or false. But, as a recent writer succinctly put it: "The Church does not fetter freedom of thought, except in so far as surmise is made useless and irrational by certainty." Did the woman in the Gospel keep on looking after she found her groat?" asks Tertullian. "Did the neighbor keep on knocking at the door, after his friend finally came down and gave him bread? Did the widow importune the hard judge, after he had granted her plea?"

"The very fact of seeking, knocking, pleading," says Tertullian, "of itself supposes a limit. That is, when the object of your search is found, when the door is opened, when the plea is granted. But the one who says we must always seek is in a bad way, for the very condition he lays down: 'always seek,' condemns him never to find; for there is no limit to his seeking. So there is nothing to find. And he proclaims that fact himself! Seeking means stop seeking at last, otherwise the search is irrational."

THE CHURCH DOES NOT FORBID FREEDOM OF THOUGHT.

"Then you admit, after all, that the Church does for-

bid freedom of thought?" I do indeed, in the sense—a moment, please—in the sense that she, and you, and every other reasonable person, would say it is foolish to keep on looking when you enjoy the certainty that you have found. "The Church does not fetter freedom of thought, except in so far as surmise is made useless and irrational by certainty." That Church, who has the grim responsibility of her millions of souls, can even you now blame her if she tells her silly sheep to stay inside the fold, and not go looking for wolves outside? Either you have found, or you have not. If you have not, keep on looking; but don't start by saying you will never find, as you do when you lay down the principle that you must always look. The Church has Divine assurance that she has found; is it irrational to stop looking after that? Is it not irrational to take up the search again, with the object of your search staring you in the face?

"But you ought to keep on looking, because maybe what you have is false, or only partial truth. Maybe more truth lies beyond." Very good. But that is another question! Let us talk about that, if you want. But first, please, look at this one, for a moment, from my point of view. If I am convinced that I already have found all the truth, and have very good reasons for believing it, can I be blamed for saying that I decline to look any further? Of course, that means more than human certainty; it means, in fact, nothing less than the perpetual presence and assistance of God. But as Mgr. Benson put it: "So overwhelmingly are the graces with which Christ has strengthened His Church, that it has become a reproach in the world that priests all teach the same dogmas. It is a reproach for which we may thank God." So, go ahead, my friend, and seek; and when your religious theories have stood the test of time and use for twenty centuries, come around, and I'll look into them. Their newness is not a passport, but a suspicious circumstance.

"But the joy of seeking! Look what you lose." And the joy of having. Look what *you* lose. Oh, all very well for the sportsman in the trivial games of life, yet does not even he stop when his quarry is down? But in the solemn business of the soul before its God. I can very well afford to stop looking, thank you, when my

reason, and He, tell me I *have*. You may doubt that I have. But don't you see? I don't. That is the point. Seeking is all right for you, who doubt you have, but for me, who am looking right at the object of my search, why even you would blame me if I said I must keep on looking for it. What would the child, who tears the bandage from his eyes when the game is over, say of his elder who solemnly declares: "No, the game must go on," and keeps his eyes bound up, when the playmate he was groping for, is safe in his arms? "But the game is not over. I haven't yet caught my man." All right, keep on groping. But I have caught him; will you excuse me if I sit down awhile and rest?

"Exactly. 'And rest.' That's the state your minds must be in, in your church, or you get out." I have already answered that, and when you read a little more widely into the history of religious thought, you will find, I believe, that perhaps the most daring flights human reason ever took, were indulged in by Catholics—would you believe it?—in the sixteenth century, and in Spain! And at that time the Inquisition was fairly active in those parts, too. They all died in their beds.

The fact is, of course, the Church, as any reasonable being must, distinguishes between two things: Those she is sure of, and those she is not. Where she is sure, she says you are wasting your time; and making a spectacle of yourself to reexamine. Where she is not sure, she gives you full fling, and "the sky's your limit." "All right; useless and foolish; granted. But why *forbid*?" Because she does not want her children to be useless and foolish. And more than that. To speak the whole thing out at once: Truth is, and always has been and will be, intolerant . . . of error. If it once became tolerant of error, it would of its nature, cease to be truth and that is impossible. And if once Truth's guardian became tolerant of error, she would lose her job. And that is impossible, too, for she has it from God. Think of the happiness your searchers would have, if you could once be sure your starting point was true. Think of the freedom and ease it would give you in your speculations. That is our freedom and ease. And ponder

well the words: "The Church does not fetter freedom of thought, except in so far as *surmise* is made useless and irrational by *certainty*."

History, the Witness of Truth

THOMAS O'HAGAN, PH.D., LITT D

WE know of no other subject so important in the curriculum of a Catholic school or college as that of history. It is the witness of truth. History is a record of the activities of man in every age and country. It is epic, it is drama, it is episode, it is catastrophe. It is as lurid as the flame of battle, it is as mellow as the last beams of the setting sun. It marches with the step of victory, it chronicles with dark pages both failure and defeat.

But history is much more than story—than his-story—it is verified fact. It is witnessed to by internal and external evidence. It rises above prejudice and passion. It sets down naught in malice. It follows the footsteps of civilization. It holds up the torch of truth to the fair face and countenance of facts. It is truth absolute neither added to nor diminished.

In our day we are sorely in need of the beneficent teaching of history because error and prejudice so largely govern the world. In truth the moral and intellectual world of today is groaning and tossing under the nightmare of falsehood and misrepresentation. We are heirs to this from our childhood—nursed and rocked by its false and spectral hand.

How then shall we gain a conception of truth from the pages of history? How shall we reach the fact that shall yield light to our understanding? First, then, let us hold in our keeping a wise skepticism and challenge every statement at the door. Let us seek for the credentials borne by witnesses to the fact before we admit the latter into the goodly company of truth. Hold no briefs, make no special pleadings, harbor no deserters from the camp of truth, though they may appear in the guise of fully accredited legates.

As regards invoking history in the defense of Catho-

lic truth there is a stupendous work to be done. It was De Maistre, the great French publicist, who said that the history of the last two hundred years has been a conspiracy against truth. This conspiracy extends and continues to our own day. Yet great light has been recently let in. Is it not the poet Lowell who speaks of Right forever on the scaffold and Wrong forever on the throne? Notwithstanding the honest purpose of many historians in our day this reign of falsehood, however, to an extent continues. The mob cries out for the crucifixion of truth and Pilates are readily found to sentence to condemnation.

Get once an error—nay, let us call it an historical lie—into the public mind, and how difficult it is to dislodge it. Look at the myth that is recognized and cherished as to the close relation and kinship between the Catholic Church and ignorance. How the rosary and homage to the Blessed Virgin, and the invocation of the Saints are made responsible for the culture of olives and not wheat in Spain and the fewness of Spanish argosies on the sea. If you hold religion responsible for what is a matter of geography, climate or racial temperament, why not hold it responsible, too, for patriotic virtues? If the Spaniard is lazy because he is a Catholic and the cure would be inoculation with one of John Wesley's hymns, why not hold that the Belgian is patriotic and brave because he is a Catholic? Again, if the Popes of the Italian Renaissance were responsible for the moral lapses and excesses of that complex period in the history of Europe, why not hold the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury responsible for the spiritual atrophy, the clerical debauchery of the fox-hunting, wine-drinking parson described by the poet Cowper in the England of the eighteenth century? We say to our Catholic students of history "Put the enemy who wilfully misrepresents the Catholic Church in the stocks of logic and tighten the screws."

If the practice of the Catholic Faith prevents the spread of intelligence and progress, how comes it that Catholic Spain of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries dominated Europe? And this misrepresentation of fact and wrongful deduction as to the Catholic Church and

progress prevails everywhere. Now, the ground of attack is Spain, now Ireland, now Quebec—wherever the Catholic Church flourishes. Before the war Belgium came in for a good coat of blackening but presto! it has been discovered that there is more progress, intelligence and patriotism to the square foot in King Albert's little realm, steeped as it is in Catholicism, than in any other country in Europe. It needed, however, a war to teach our philosophical wiseacres of England and America that the philosophy inculcated in the German universities is false. Men who are dull to accept wisdom and truth from a Church canon are sometimes open to instruction when this instruction is delivered by an army cannon. The latter is less dogmatic but more penetrating.

As regards the Spain of today, its critics are absolutely dishonest. They cite the Spain of the middle of the last century and call it the Spain of today. But within the last fifty or sixty years Spain in its life and development has not been stationary. It is quite true that the progress of Spain will not measure up to that of Great Britain or France or the United States, but in some aspects of its moral life Spain is far ahead of anyone of these three countries.

Let us see what Spain does educationally and we cite here its standing from a Year Book issued very recently. Spain has nine universities, attended by 16,000 students, of whom 5,000 attend the Central University of Madrid. It has 26,000 public schools, attended by 2,000,000 pupils, and 6,000 private schools attended by 350,000 pupils. This gives in all an attendance of 2,350,000, which in a population of nineteen million gives Spain a school attendance of nearly thirteen per cent. of its population. This is better than Russia, better than Greece, and equal to Belgium and Holland. Now, nobody would maintain that Belgium and Holland are behind in education or low in the scale of civilization. Then why single out Spain for condemnation?

But let us see wherein Spain is in advance of the other countries of Europe. Spain is by all odds the most temperate country in Europe. Now certainly, temperance is a great virtue—at least Prohibition lecturers aver and

teach so. Spain has also the least suicides of any country in Europe. It has, too, the highest birth-rate in Europe—38 in every thousand of its inhabitants. It has no divorce and its marriage separations are very few. . . .

As to Ireland there is no other country in the world has less crime, though its critics would have us believe that it is rocked by crime. It is a most common thing in Ireland to have the presiding judge at the Assizes presented with a pair of white gloves, indicating that there is no criminal case in the dock. No country in the world has less illegitimate children than Ireland, the sum total of those belonging almost exclusively to Ulster.

Then when we come to Quebec—French Canada—which has been so grossly misrepresented by the secular English press of Canada and the United States, we have a condition of prosperity and progress and moral life that obtains in no other part of our great Dominion. Judged by the number of illiterates—those who cannot read or write—Quebec occupies a creditable place, having less than four other provinces: Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and New Brunswick. As to crime this is how it stands as compared with Ontario according to the last report of the Minister of Justice for Canada. It will be observed that the population of Ontario and Quebec is now almost equal. For Quebec, the criminal and minor convictions for 1915 were 27,205, while those of Ontario were 58,876. These facts cannot be disputed or controverted and bear eloquent testimony to the position which Quebec occupies intellectually and morally among her sister provinces of the Dominion.

Let us here set down the fact that we Catholics cannot be too alert or watchful in correcting all misrepresentation of facts in connection with the Catholic Church and the condition and progress of Catholic countries.

Yet in doing this let us not swing to the other extreme. The Catholic Church does not need our lies. We must remember that the Catholic Faith as practised in Spain, Ireland, the United States, Italy or Canada, does not and cannot change human nature. Even our Holy Father, while directing the Catholic conscience of the whole world, remains a man subject to all the frailties and weaknesses of man though dowered and strengthened and

avored with special Divine graces as the White Shepherd of Mankind.

Let us then witness everywhere to truth judicially, not controversially. Nothing is more convincing than an incontestable fact. History written with the pen of truth supplies the fact. This is the sword that shall conquer though the enemy drive down upon us with all the bewildering forces born of error, darkness and night.

Luther at Worms

CONTRARY to its wont, the *Saturday Evening Post* some time ago invaded the field of history in search of a portrait of Martin Luther. The effort was praiseworthy, but the quest unsuccessful. The picture presented by the *Post* in no way represents the Luther who, with Melancthon, authorized Philip of Hesse to have two wives. It bears no resemblance to the Luther who advised this same Philip "for the sake and good of the Christian Church to tell a good strong lie." The Luther who sat for this portrait is a lion-hearted Christian knight, who flung an immortal gage of battle before his persecutors at Worms: "God help me. I could do no different."

Brave are the words, but they were never spoken by Luther. They have no place in the Latin account written by himself, which concludes, "God help me. Amen," a customary phrase at the end of a discourse, to be found elsewhere in Luther's writings. The form, "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen," was first published at Wittenberg in 1521, where it was found desirable, writes Grisar, quoting the Protestant Wrede, "to render the words rather more forcible and high-sounding." "There is not the faintest proof," concludes Wrede, in his "*Deutsche Reichstagsakten*," II, 555, "that the amplification came from anyone who actually heard the words." The new form, testifies Kalkoff, another Protestant, in his "*Die Depeschen des Nuncius Aleander vom Wormser Reichstag*," p. 174, has "no claim to credibility." Further proof is given by Müller, Friedensburg, Burkhardt, Elter, Maurenbrecher, Köstlin-Kawerau, Kolde, Hausrath, and a host of other Prot-

estant scholars. "It would be well," advises the Protestant Böhmer in his *"Luther im Lichte der Neueren Forschung,"* "not to quote any more those most celebrated of Luther's words as though they were his."

The advice will scarcely be heeded. Party cries die hard. No scholar can defend the authenticity of "those most celebrated of Luther's words," but the unscholarly and the unscrupulous will quote them freely as proof conclusive that in Luther the world has a peerless example of Christian knighthood.